To assemble your pocket guide, cut along outer black line, then fold on dotted lines.

What's a Water Footprint?

The water footprint of an individual is the total volume of freshwater used to produce the goods and services consumed by that person every day. Each of us can reduce our water footprint by making wise choices everyday, as well as making long-term changes in our household habits.

Using less water around the house reduces pressure on our sewage treatment facilities, uses less energy and protects our environment by reducing chemical impact on our rivers, lakes and ground water. By saving water and by reducing the amount of contaminants you add to it, you're supporting healthy lakes and streams and preserving Minnesota's most vital natural resource.

Take this pocket guide with you shopping and keep it handy in the kitchen and garden shed. Small changes make a big difference over time.

In the Kitchen and Laundry

- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the fridge–**save 200 to 300 gallons a month**.
- Avoid using the garbage disposal for discarded food; better yet, compost it–**save 50 to 150 gallons a month**.
- When washing dishes by hand, don't leave the water running; use a sprayer for rinsing–**save 300 to 500 gallons a month**.
- Use the least amount of detergent possible to reduce pollution and cut down on rinsing–**save 50 to 150 gallons a month**.
- Defrost foods in the fridge instead of with warm water–**save 50 to 150 gallons a month**.
- Ditch chemical drainer openers and disposal cleaners in favor of a gallon of boiling water, a cup of vinegar and half cup of lemon juice.
- Run your dishwasher and washing machine only when full–**save 300 to 800 gallons a month**.

In the Bathroom

- Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth, lathering your hands and face and while shaving–**save up to 10 gallons a day**.
- Shorten your showers by one or two minutes and choose showers over baths–**save up to 800 gallons a month**.
- Install a low-flow shower head and toilet–**save up to six gallons a minute and seven with each flush**.
- Displace water in your toilet tank with a brick or plastic bag weighted with pebbles and filled with water–**save up to 10 gallons a day**.
- While waiting for hot water to reach the shower head, catch the cold water in a container to use on outside plants–**save 200 to 300 gallons a month**.
- Don't use your toilet as an ashtray or garbage can–**save your pipes and five to seven gallons with each flush**.

In the Yard and Garden

- Mulch trees and plants–**save 750–1,500 gallons a month**.
- Water in the early morning or evening hours to avoid evaporation–**save 300 gallons a month**.
- Don't water on windy days or decrease the flow of automatic sprinklers–**save 300 gallons per watering**.
- Replace your lawn with native grasses or plants–**save 750–1,500 gallons a month**.
- Set lawn mower blades one notch higher–**save 500–1,500 gallons a month**.
- Use a pool cover to cut down on evaporation–**save 1,000 gallons a month**.
- Treat kids to the beach instead of playtime with the garden hose and sprinkler toys–**save up to 10 gallons a minute**.
- Dispose of materials properly–**one quart of oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of ground water**.

A Pocket Guide To

Reducing Your Water Footprint

Water Resources Center

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to Discover℠

Learn More

Check out these sites for interactive tools including personal water footprint calculators for more ways you, your friends and family can conserve water.

waterfootprint.org
epa.gov/kids/water
waterusewisely.com
h2oconserve.org
groundwater.org
cleanwaterm n.org

You can download a copy of this guide at the Water Resource Center's website www.wrc.umn. While you're there, take the Minnesotans and Their Water survey which will help guide statewide water improvement over the next 25 years.

Water in the News

- You heard right—commercially bottled water is expensive, environmentally damaging, and no better or safer than tap water. Skip the bottled water and use a refillable thermos with water from your tap.
- Washing your car in the driveway sends a poisonous brew of gasoline, oil and detergent into storm sewers, damaging and killing aquatic life. Instead, choose a commercial car wash–and look for one that recycles its water.
- Antibacterial soaps and detergents are harmful to aquatic life and are no more effective than soap and water at preventing illnesses. Washing your hands for 30 seconds or while humming "Happy Birthday" twice is a great idea–make sure to turn off the faucet while you lather.

While Shopping

While the average American drinks under a half a gallon of water a day, our daily diets require hundreds of gallons of water to produce. Here are some surprising ways to think about your purchases:

- One 8 ounce serving of beef requires **1,350 gallons**
- One 8 ounce serving of chicken requires **330 gallons**
- One cotton T-shirt requires **256 gallons**
- One 8 ounce serving of milk requires **48 gallons**
- One orange requires **14 gallons**
- One tomato requires **8 gallons**
- A typical Thanksgiving dinner for six requires more than **30,000 gallons**

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